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WORKS IN PROGRESS

ESTABLISHED IN 1990 BY THE THURSTON COUNTY RAINBOW COALITION

Isthmus rezone becomes controversy of statewide significance

by Janet Blanding

On a recent sunny Friday afternoon, I met a friend from Seattle who was down for the day to lobby at the Capitol. We walked from the Capitol campus, down the switchback trail and through Heritage Park to Traditions Café. As we strolled, encountering a number of state workers, tourists, and others using the path and park, I asked her what she thought of the view. "It's beautiful," she said, "except for that huge eyesore."

As we drew closer to the "eyesore," I told her about the ongoing battle over the isthmus area between Budd Inlet and Capitol Lake, a battle which is now being fought on the state level, as a bill to declare the isthmus a shoreline of statewide significance is progressing through the legislative process. As a citizen of Washington State, my out-of-town friend was offended that the views from the Capitol Campus and the state-owned Heritage Park were being compromised, but even more strongly expressed was her astonishment that anyone would be trying to build million dollar condos in today's market—condo values in her Seattle neighborhood have declined sharply in recent months. "Olympia could probably meet its future housing needs better by allowing squatters into that big ugly building," she joked.

Karen Fraser takes it to the State Senate

"The city made a mistake of historic proportions, and that's why I feel compelled to act," said Karen Fraser, addressing the Senate Government Operation and Elections Committee as she introduced bills that would protect the State Capitol's historic views by limiting building heights on the isthmus and declare it a shoreline of statewide significance. These bills seek to protect the isthmus from the development which the Olympia City Council has enabled with the Comprehensive Plan Amendment passed in December 2008. Sam Hunt has introduced a companion bill in the House. Senate Substitute Bill 5800 passed the Senate on March 5, with 36 for, 10 against and three excused. House Bill 2081 has until April 17 to pass the House.

> If you read between the lines of the preliminary feasibility study, the main barrier to the feasibility of a park is insufficient support from the current city council.

More crowded than ever

While many events concerning the isthmus have drawn such crowds that they became "standing room only," the committee hearing for Senate bills 5799 and 5800 (later combined into Substitute Senate Bill 5800) was so packed that guards prevented many people from even entering the room. The hallway was crowded with interested parties; city councilmembers, city staff, Oly2012's steering committee, and Triway representatives clustered together as they waited to gain entrance, any pretense of impartiality abandoned for the occasion. Even more Friends of the Waterfront, 2020 Vision Olympia and isthmus park advocates waited, as well. The ratio of rezone supporters to rezone opponents was pretty much the same as usual: 30 people signed in opposing the bills, and 111 signed in support of them.

Substitute Senate Bill 5800 would limit the building heights on the isthmus to 35 feet, as well as designating the isthmus as a "shoreline of statewide significance," a designation which would confer on it some protections under the Shoreline Management Act. Chaired by Darlene Fairley of Lake Forest Park, the Committee heard testimony from bill sponsor Senator Karen Fraser, councilmember Joan Machlis, city manager Steve Hall, former Secretary of State Ralph Munro, and Professor Emeritus Norman Johnston, an expert on the original design of the Capitol Campus.

An especially effective speaker was Kit Ford of the Behind the Badge Foundation (formerly the Law Enforcement Memorial Foundation), whose brother-in-law was killed in the line of duty. She spoke of her work to create a memorial outside of the

Triway project manager and former Olympia City Councilmember Jeannette Hawkins took some artistic liberty when citing a 2003 brief to favor her current employer. (Photo by Terrence Knight)

▸ **ISTHMUS** continues on page 5

Artesian well, despite some setbacks, to remain free flowing

by Janet Blanding

Despite being nearly derailed by Diamond Parking, the agreements to keep the Artesian well downtown open are proceeding toward conclusion, and it seems likely that the well in the parking lot will continue to flow freely into the unforeseeable future.

Originally, agreements were reached between the City of Olympia and the Public Utilities District (regarding cost-share on water quality testing), and between the PUD and Diamond Parking (for ongoing testing and operation of the well). Before signing the agreement, however, Diamond grew nervous about liability, and threatened to cap the well as soon as March 1.

Speaking on Kim Dobson's program on KAOS, Parallel University, Thurston PUD Commissioner Paul Pickett remarked that "As soon as we started talking to [Diamond] about putting something on paper, they got the attorneys involved. They got real nervous about liability." After PUD drew up a new contract in which the public utility assumed liability regarding well use, Diamond agreed to sign. It should be noted, however, that the agreement allows Diamond to withdraw with 14 days notice, so the continued availability of well water at the current site is not very secure. Diamond has expressed interest in selling the lots currently occupied by the parking lot and the well for $1.2 million, a price which seems to hold little allure for the City of Olympia. If another buyer is found, the well could be capped within a matter of weeks. In Pickett's words, "It's a short term fix."

> An Artesian well in an attractive setting close to the new city hall could be a valuable public amenity and would also stimulate business downtown.

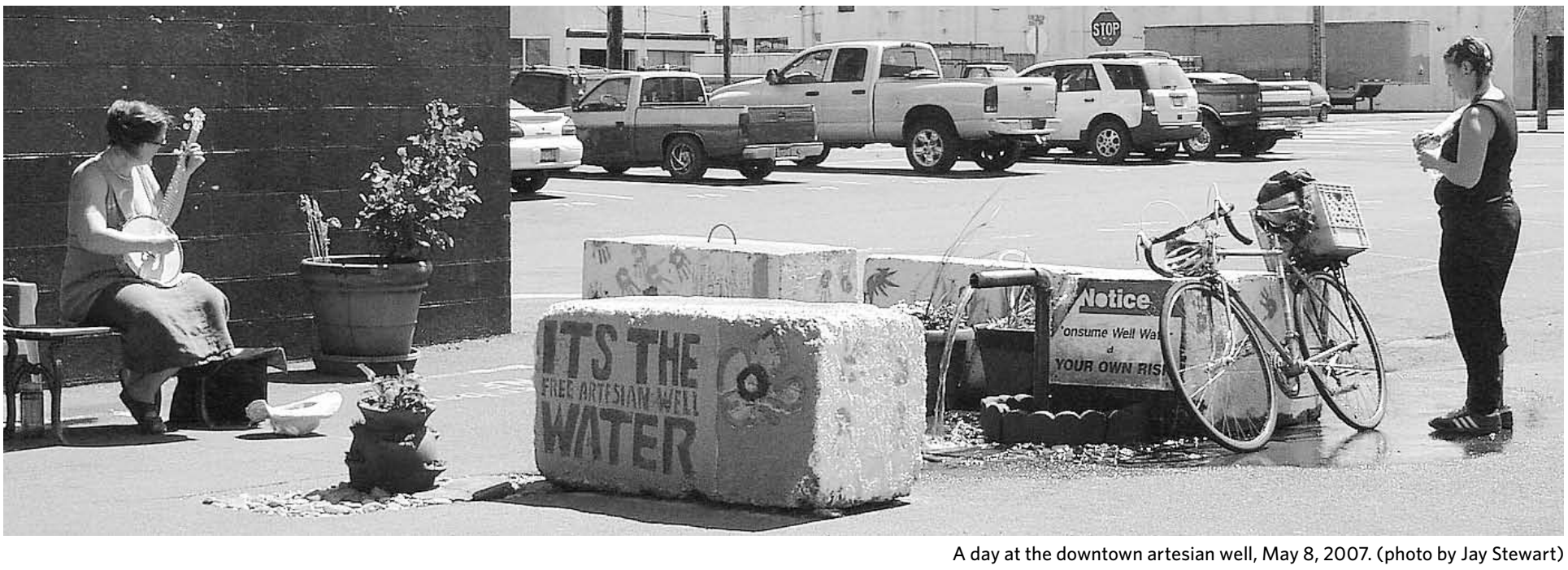
The grass roots activist group formerly known as It's Still the Water, is now calling itself H_2Oly: Artesian Well Advocates. When H_2Oly met on February 21, a few days before the agreement was reached, a large crowd showed up, and a great deal of concern was expressed at the prospect of the well's being capped. It was reported at the meeting that Diamond had told PUD and the City of Olympia that it intended to prevent access to the well on March 1—either by capping the well or fencing off the area—if an agreement could not be reached with Thurston PUD regarding liability. Plans were made to construct a phone tree and maintain a 24-hour vigil at the well so that a peaceful, lawful protest could be quickly arranged if Diamond took action to prevent public access.

Karen Patrick, spokesperson for the group H_2Oly: Artesian Well Advocates was relieved that the Public Utilities District and Diamond were able to reach an agreement. "I feel relieved that the water will keep on flowing at the site," she said. "However humble the current appearance of the site, I just feel blessed at having this resource nearby."

Because Diamond's asking price for the well, $1.2 million dollars, is out of sync with land values in the area and prohibitively high with respect to public acquisition, the possibility of lobbying the city to exercise its right to eminent domain and take possession of the land for its assessed value (currently $226,550) has been raised. Some observers have expressed a sense that there is little interest on the city's part in taking such an action.

Others, including members of the *Works*

▸ **WELL** continues on page 4



A day at the downtown artesian well, May 8, 2007. (photo by Jay Stewart)

WORKS IN PROGRESS

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Please send text as Word attachments. Artwork and photos can be sent electronically or we can scan them for you as camera-ready/black & white.

WIP reserves the right to publish in whole or part all submissions. For editing purposes, please enclose your phone number.

Articles may be reprinted. Please cite source.

If you don't see your issue being covered in Works In Progress*, it's because you aren't writing about it! (Or aren't finding someone else to cover it!)*

Send submissions to *olywip@gmail.com*. Send event announcements to *wipannouncements@gmail.com*.

Or mail to Works In Progress, PO Box 295, Olympia, WA 98507-0295.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS/EVENTS

Suzanne Swift is free!

Suzanne Swift is at long last free from the military.This concludes a 2½ year long campaign for local activists on her behalf, which started not long after she went public about her sexual assault in June 2006. Rallies were held outside Ft. Lewis, for her and for all the other public war resisters at the fort. Later that summer, a group of young local activists camped outside Ft. Lewis for 10 days in support of Suzanne Swift, calling the demonstration "Camp Suzanne". In Jan. 2007, a final rally was held to protest her confinement resulting from the military's decision to prosecute her for going AWOL (as opposed to prosecuting the people who assaulted her in the first place). Because of Suzanne's courage in coming forward, many more people are aware of the pandemic of rape in the military, and many other sexual assault survivors have come forward.

The Iraq Memorial to Life needs your support!

The Iraq Memorial to Life display is under construction around the state of Washington. We seek volunteers to help with outreach, organizing marker making sessions and fundraising.

If you have 6 to 8 hours of time, please contact us at *peace@IraqMemorialtoLife.org* Let us know where you live, your skills and interests, and the peace/church/community organizations you represent.

Hijas De Su Madre: Las Mamalogues

A Bilingual Intergenerational Exploration of Matrilineal History

Friday, March 6, 7:30pm, Lecture Hall 1 Rotunda, The Evergreen State College, Olympia

Join us for an evening of ritualized storytelling and community healing, claiming and reclaiming our Mother's lived experience, and unveiling an identity rooted in the past while grounded in the present. All ages welcome. Please bring family & friends. Featuring Maritza Soldedad Sanchez, Fabiola Ortiz Romero, Norma Alicia Pino and Alejandra Abreu. Las Mamalogues is part of TESC International Women's Week & sponsored by The Women of Color Coalition. For more information contact *wocc.tesc@gmail.com*.

Stop the check points—International Women's Day rally and march

Saturday, March 7, 1:30pm, Intersection of Washington Street and Sequim Avenue, Sequim

Sequim has been the site of stepped-up Border Patrol activities in recent weeks. Residents from across the Olympic Peninsula plan to converge in Sequim on Saturday, March 7 for an International Women's Day rally. Participants will gather at 1:30pm at the intersection of Washington St. and Sequim Ave., then march down Washington St. at 2:15pm to nearby Pioneer Park for a rally with speakers and music.

For more info email *info@stopthecheckpoints.com*. The event is sponsored by Stop the Checkpoints and endorsers include the ACLU of Washington, Clallam County Green Party, Code Pink-WA, Community to Community-Bellingham, Freedom Socialist Party–WA, Olympic Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship, Port Townsend Peace Movement, Radical Women–Port Angeles & Seattle Chapters, Socialist Party Women's Commission.

Remembering Rachel Corrie: Her life and work for peace and justice

Monday, March 16, 6:00-8:30pm, Olympia Center, rooms 101 & 102, 222 Columbia St NW, Olympia

Please join us in remembering and honoring the life and work of Rachel Corrie. Rachel was killed in Palestine on March 16, 2003 in Rafah, Gaza. She was crushed to death by an Israeli military Caterpillar D9 bulldozer. Six years after Rachel's death her story continues to resonate with people throughout the world. Rachel was born and raised here in Olympia, creating a unique and special relationship to Rachel, her work and to Palestine.

The evening begins with a community potluck. Please bring a dish. Beverages, utensils and plates will be provided. The potluck will be followed by music performed by Seattle singer/songwriter and activist Jim Page. We will then show a short video clip of the recent destruction in Rafah, followed by a community discussion on people's reflections six years after Rachel's death as well as other topics. The evening will conclude with a walk to the waterfront for a vigil.

For more info, contact the Rachel Corrie Foundation for Peace and Justice, *info@rachelcorriefoundation.org*, *www.rachelcorriefoundation.org*, 360.754.3998.

Six Years of the Iraq War: Film showing—from the Port of Olympia to Afghanistan

Thursday, March 19, 6:30pm
Capitol Theater, 205 5th Ave. SE

On March 19th, 2003, American war planes began dropping bombs on Baghdad, marking the beginning of the moral and financial disaster that six years later continues to embroil the nation. Come sit and enjoy your middle-class American privilege, in the safe, climate controlled theater environment to passively observe the horrors that have been perpetrated in your name, using your tax dollars. In the broken cityscape of Kabul, Afghanistan, amid the dust and rubble of war, Westerners and Afghans adjust to the uncertain possibilities of peace. ***Kabul Transit*** (2007) shuttles through the broken streets of the city, listening in on conversations, posing questions, probing the darker alleys mainstream media avoids.

Hundreds of people took part in sustained direct action to demilitarize the Port of Olympia for ten days in November 2007. Directed by AJ Strosahl and Noah Sochet, ***A Call to Action*** (2009) documents the multifaceted effort by Olympia activists to resist the use of our infrastructure to enable American imperialism.

Spring into action: The second citizens forum on the isthmus

Saturday, March 21, 10am to 12:30pm, First United Methodist Church, 1224 Legion Way SE, Olympia

Sponsored by the Friends of the Waterfront, 20/20 Vision Olympia, the Olympia Capitol Park Foundation and the League of Women Voters, this forum will give the public a chance to learn what's been happening regarding the rezone of the isthmus, as well as offer opportunities for involvement. Speakers will address the results of the isthmus park feasibility study, recent legislation regarding the isthmus, the progress of lawsuits and appeals, and some new, improved candidates for city council may be introduced. Find out what's happening and how you can be involved! Free admission. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

See related article on page 1.

We're still at war! Stop the wars in Gaza, Iraq and Afghanistan

Sunday, Mar. 22, 11 am, Port of Olympia Amphitheater, 915 Washington St. NE

Stop the wars in Gaza, Iraq, and Afghanistan! Activists and community members will gather at the Port of Olympia amphitheater (by the wooden tower on the boardwalk) and march in protest of continued US war and occupation overseas. Meet at Sylvester Park at noon for free food, local music, networking, and speakers. The Obama Administration plans for a drawdown of troops from Iraq, but a "surge" of 17,000 in Afghanistan and, at almost $600 billion dollars, Obama's proposed military budget alone would be the largest in history, not including "homeland security," emergency "war on terror" appropriations, national debt, stress on the VA, foreign military aid, and other costs that every year amount to hundreds of billions more. This must not stand unopposed! Join with the community in an expression of solidarity and outrage against another four years of imperialism in our names.

When Labor strikes, it says to its master:
I shall no longer work at your command.
When it votes for a party of its own, it says:
I shall no longer vote at your command.
When it creates its own classes and colleges, it says:
I shall no longer think at your command.
Labor's challenge to education is the most fundamental of the three.
—Henry de Man, 1921

The Olympia Local of the American Postal Workers Union, AFL-CIO, express their deep appreciation to the TESC Labor Center and *Works in Progress* for providing years of service to the community.
Educate – Agitate – Organize!

Poverty issues need legislative attention, now more than ever

by Monica Peabody

Over 400 poor people from all over Washington State celebrated Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday at the People's Summit and March on the Capitol. Seven organizations planned a day where the voice of people demanding their human rights and an end to poverty would be heard. The Thurston County Tenants Union, POWER, Washington CAN, VOICES, Real Change and the Statewide Poverty Action Network organized the day's activities, that commenced at 9 am at St. John's Episcopal Church. After a lively discussion of the issues we were bringing to our legislators, and many personal testimonies about the difficulties of living in poverty, Nancy Amedei provided a pep talk on how to be an effective citizen lobbyist. Complete with a marching band, we marched down Capitol Boulevard to the front steps of the Capitol Building. There we held a rally demanding change that would have a real effect on poverty in Washington state.

We then visited our legislators with a united message, specifically asking for these legislative items:

Quality, affordable health care for all

Skyrocketing health care costs are a key contributor to the economic crisis in our state and in our nation. Reforming our failing health care system is vital to the health of our communities and the health of our economy. Also, each person should be able to speak with her/his doctor and know what is going on with her/his health. Lack of interpretation services creates barriers for limited English speakers in accessing care. Individuals must oftentimes rely on children, relatives and friends to communicate complex and confidential information. Lawmakers should require insurance companies to pay for interpretation services for patients who speak limited English so everyone can get the quality medical attention they deserve. Call the Legislative Hotline, (800) 562-6000 to indicate your support for HB 1519 which will require language access services for persons with limited English proficiency in health care and insurance matters.

Income supports

During these difficult economic times, we need more than ever to strengthen programs such as GAU (General Assistance for the Unemployable), TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), child support, child care, housing, Medicaid and Basic Health. These programs sustain low-income families and play a key economic role in local communities, especially in smaller communities whose economies depend on family stability. Make no cuts to these crucial programs. We support you in seeking revenue to make sure other important programs are also not cut. More specifically we ask legislators to ensure (1) the 3% TANF increase, passed last year after 15 years of no increase, is in the 2009-11 budget; (2) parents are given three months at home with their newborns, with no exceptions, before being required to participate in work activities; (3) the childcare co-pay is limited to a percentage of the family income, so parents can afford to go to work; (4) evaluate the welfare to work program to implement improvements toward a living wage, including access to education and training.

Responsible lending

Payday lenders typically charge more than 390% interest (APR), taking fees out of the pockets of working families to the tune of almost $200 million annually in our state. Overwhelmingly marketed toward low to moderate income families and communities of color, these small-dollar loans are designed with terms borrowers usually cannot meet, forcing them into high-cost, long-term debt. An average payday loan borrower repays $827 to borrow $339. Nearly one-third of states now protect consumers by limiting allowable interest rates to 36% or less. Nationally, Congress capped the annual percentage rate at 36% to protect all military families. At a time when working families need every penny to help meet their basic needs, Washington borrowers need access to small-dollar loans they can successfully repay. A reasonable loan product with normal interest rates will help people through tough economic times. Washington lawmakers should extend the 36% interest rate cap to protect all families. Support HB 1073 which would regulate small loans.

> Citizenship helps integrate immigrants into communities and promotes stable communities. However, low-income working immigrants often fall through the cracks when it comes to naturalization.

Naturalization and the New Americans Initiative

Currently in Washington State, there are approximately 170,000 legal permanent residents who are eligible for citizenship but have not yet naturalized because of barriers such as access to services, lack of knowledge of the benefits of citizenship, or lack of understanding of the process. Citizenship helps integrate immigrants into communities and promotes stable communities. However, low-income working immigrants often fall through the cracks when it comes to naturalization. The current state program's funding affords approximately 3,000 immigrants on public assistance the opportunity to naturalize via application assistance. The *New Americans Initiative* reaches out to 170,000 immigrants eligible to naturalize through a statewide multilingual hotline, web site, ethnic multimedia campaign, and capacity building for naturalization service providers. The current economic turmoil only heightens the need for investments in programs that help immigrants (now 14% of our workforce) build stable futures for themselves, their families, and our communities. Support and fund the *New Americans Initiative* and all naturalization programs.

A home for everyone

In most areas of the state, working families who use a public subsidy such as a Section 8 voucher or Social Security to pay their rent, face serious discrimination in private market housing and are often unable to find an apartment. This discrimination is based on negative stereotypes, and all too often victimizes families of color. To help ensure that Washington families can make use of the housing resources provided them, the state should ban discrimination against legitimate sources of income or the use of housing vouchers. In addition, the state must expand housing options for those most in need by making the Housing Trust Fund better able to serve people earning the lowest incomes, and increasing funds for emergency shelters. This is a time to invest urgently in making housing immediately available and accessible to everyone who needs it.

If you were unable to attend this year's summit, do not worry. There will be more opportunities to take to your legislators a strong message to end poverty. As Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Our nettlesome task is to discover how to organize our strength into compelling power."

POWER begins photo project in Olympia

by Tovah Rudawski and Lindsay Day, POWER Work Study/Interns

POWER (Parents Organizing for Welfare and Economic Rights) has begun a new project that uses photography to examine the presence or absence of human rights violations resulting from the conditions of poverty in our community. Eight low-income community members took a weekend to look critically at Olympia and document, through photography, the support or violations of human rights they found.

When discussing their photos, the conversation focused on the subject of space. One participant wondered who is in charge of it, who gets to decide who gets in, who must stay out, and who has the right to determine the proper use of public areas.

Another participant felt that he had to "illustrate by absence, which took some thinking." He used chalk to write out the sidewalk ordinance in block lettering across a sidewalk downtown and then photographed it. This illustrated the very effective strategy employed by the Olympia City Council of making invisible a serious issue of human rights—homelessness—by moving homeless individuals off city streets through criminalizing the act of sitting on the sidewalk. "These photos gave me an opportunity to see what is happening or has happened around town—and a new way in which to talk about it."

> "The photo I took of the porch at Bread and Roses, because it's one of the only places in town where people can sleep or sit, where the space isn't wasted, that space can be used for community."

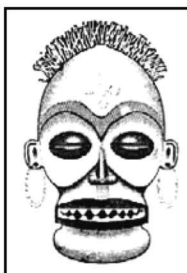
One contributor took multiple photos of vacant lots and for sale signs. "It was a great way to focus on the smaller things that are part of a larger issue," he said. Unfinished development seemed to be the repeating force that kept empty lots fenced off to people. This brought the conversation again to the question of who gets to decide to use land for what and for whose benefit. "These ideas are confusing," said another participant, who focused mainly on her personal experience of being low-income and living with a disability. "It's so clear that there are multiple levels of oppression going on, and I'm left to figure out the mess of it."

Many folks felt that our dignity as low-income and homeless people is at stake when a government so clearly devalues its citizens need for homes and community space as was revealed during this first round of photography. We asked each participant which photograph was their favorite, and one participant replied, "The photo I took of the porch at Bread and Roses, because it's one of the only places in town where people can sleep or sit, where the space isn't wasted, that space can be used for community." Her words are poignant and timely, as that space will cease to exist in April.

Even though much of the discussion revolved around the human rights violations which the group discovered, the meeting ended on a positive note. "This is a new way to tell stories about Olympia—and to figure out the ways in which our city is invisibly controlled, and how to act against it,"said one contributor.

POWER wants this to be an ongoing project with an ever growing number of low-income participants sharing their brilliance with the community at large about the reality of poverty in Olympia. Through this we hope to encourage reflection, analysis, communication, and action that will create a more inclusive, collective Olympia whose aim is to support not just those with means but also those who are forced to find their own way to necessities. If you are interested in participating in this project, please contact POWER at *welfarerights@riseup.net* or 360-352-9716.

The porch of Bread and Roses, doing what it does best. (Photo provided by POWER)



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▸ **WELL** continued from page 1

In Progress staff, feel that the city should be strongly encouraged to exercise eminent domain on the well site. At a relatively low cost to the city, many benefits to the public could result. An Artesian well in an attractive setting close to the new city hall could be a valuable public amenity, one that draws people together to use a free, natural resource, but which would also stimulate business downtown. The recent study performed by the Washington Conservation Corps showed that most well users combined trips to the well with other errands downtown, errands which often benefit the many small, locally-owned businesses in the area.

Through the years, while tolerating well use by the public, Diamond Parking has done its best to use its well ownership as a bargaining chip in negotiations with the city, trying to use its leverage to get a lucrative city-wide parking contract, or to sell the well lots at an inflated price. As activists, politicians, and state, county and city agencies have worked together in an admirable spirit of comity, Diamond has remained entrenched in a typical corporate attitude of greed and mistrust.

"They're business people—they're there to make money," said Pickett, who also stated a hope that a developer might purchase and enhance the area around the existing well. The City of Olympia was even less critical of Diamond's behavior; its press release stated that "Diamond Parking Service, the owner of the well, worked cooperatively throughout this process with the City and PUD."

The dream of an Artesian well as a community gathering spot in a centrally located, publicly owned and beautiful setting continues to be an elusive dream, one that H_2Oly: Artesian Well Advocates intends to work toward. In the meantime, a short-term fix has been found through the coming together of a diverse group reacting in response to the disbanding of the Friends of the Artesians (FOA), which contributed considerable time, money, and passion to the project of keeping the water free flowing for many years. I asked Jim Ingersoll of FOA how it felt to see the City of Olympia finally joining forces with the PUD to keep the well open and tested at public expense in response to the FOA disbanding. His response to my query (with just a few minor edits) is reproduced in its entirety here:

Dear Janet,

You said last night in your phone interview of me that you are musing about the curious phenomenon that just after Friends of Artesians announced it would disband that there has been a sudden groundswell of new voices and political activity. You wondered if that wasn't ironic or sad, and you wondered why all of a sudden, now? You wondered if the city council, being in trouble with the citizenry in other matters wasn't trying to regain favor with the people by turning to this more popular issue.

As a backdrop to any comment I might risk making, I want to point out that in all human life cycle processes there comes a "time-to-move-on". So, one answer is that this is such a time. When I was called into this vision by others concerned about the well, I was 52. I am now 68. Four generations of high school students have passed through adolescence in that time. Students who were 18 in 1992 are now 34 and *their* children...some of them... are entering high school. Suddenly, the US Government and the people of Olympia have new leadership. Younger folks can hear the call and dream their dreams and we need you and them to engage this process in endless renewal. The water certainly is a symbol for *that*.

> The vision/dream of pure, uncontaminated, untreated, free water that is owned publicly and protected for perpetuity is a pure idea for care of the soul of life for all people.

For a short answer, try thinking of it this way: For all the time of my role as coordinator of Friends of Artesians, it always helped me to think of the water as equivalent to conversation we engage to create community life. Consider the hydrogeological cycle and specifically the water itself as a literal picture of "our collective life in community." Thinking literally (magically like a child also helps) we can say that our "life" like the "water" is constantly evaporating, condensing, precipitating, sinking and freezing and melting and running above ground and underground.

How rich is the metaphor? The "water" (i.e. political problem solving) moves underground and gets under pressure under thick confining layers of clay. (whew...I wonder what thick confining layers of clay look like in political terms). And it takes a loooong time. For what seems like over 2,000 years we rub against each other believing different things, looking different, being afraid of each other, making war and longing for peace and love, dominating and retreating.

But it is WATER. Water—the staff of life. And water...what does it do?...Ah...seeks its own level. And what are we doing out here in the news and conversations of community...what is our longing and desire? As human beings belonging in a community... what are we seeking? So we stay under pressure and keep finding ways through tight spots of conflict and economic collapses. (*O Brother Where Art Thou*, the Coen Brothers' treatment of Homer's Odyssey...the great classic story of homecoming comes to mind...well, this is my problem, I get carried away. You can see what I am suggesting.)

The "tight spot" Friends got into that caused us to disband is a natural event in human community. Until every voice is heard and all people are a part of the process we will not arrive at the secure center from which we flow toward each other in basic trust. Friends came to this place for over 16 years of inviting and encouraging a pure conversation that was one of respectful listening and one void of disingenuous motivations. The vision/dream of pure, uncontaminated, untreated, free water that is owned publicly and protected for perpetuity is a pure idea for care of the soul of life for all people. It is a moral and ethical imperative.

The political process of conversation to solve how we can all be owners is required by the water to be pure. How we get there is as important as getting there. This kind of leadership is needed from our elected officials: Pure (all are equal and represented at the table), Uncontaminated (we all share equally our imperfections and forgive and find redemption in confession and truth), Open and Flowing, Free, protected and respected through ownership of our natural heritage.

Like the water, we stop and build pressure...and flow again with new pathways being discovered to live in right relationships to new realities.

How beautiful it is.

Respectfully,

Rev Dr Jim Ingersoll,
retiring coordinator,
Friends of Artesians

The Isthmus Blues

by the Isthmus Blues Band

I got the isthmus,
I got the isthmus blues.
Don't know what I'm gonna do,
Whoa, I love that view.

Sent a letter to the editor,
wrote a song,
Thousands testified,
But it all came out wrong.

I got the isthmus,
I got the isthmus blues.
Don't know what I'm gonna do,
Whoa, I love that view.

That mistake on the lake,
Makes my head ache,
And two more mistakes
Will make this poor heart break.
(Instrumental Interlude)

Wall off the lake,
Wall off the bay,
Wall off the sky,
(Well just) wall it all away.

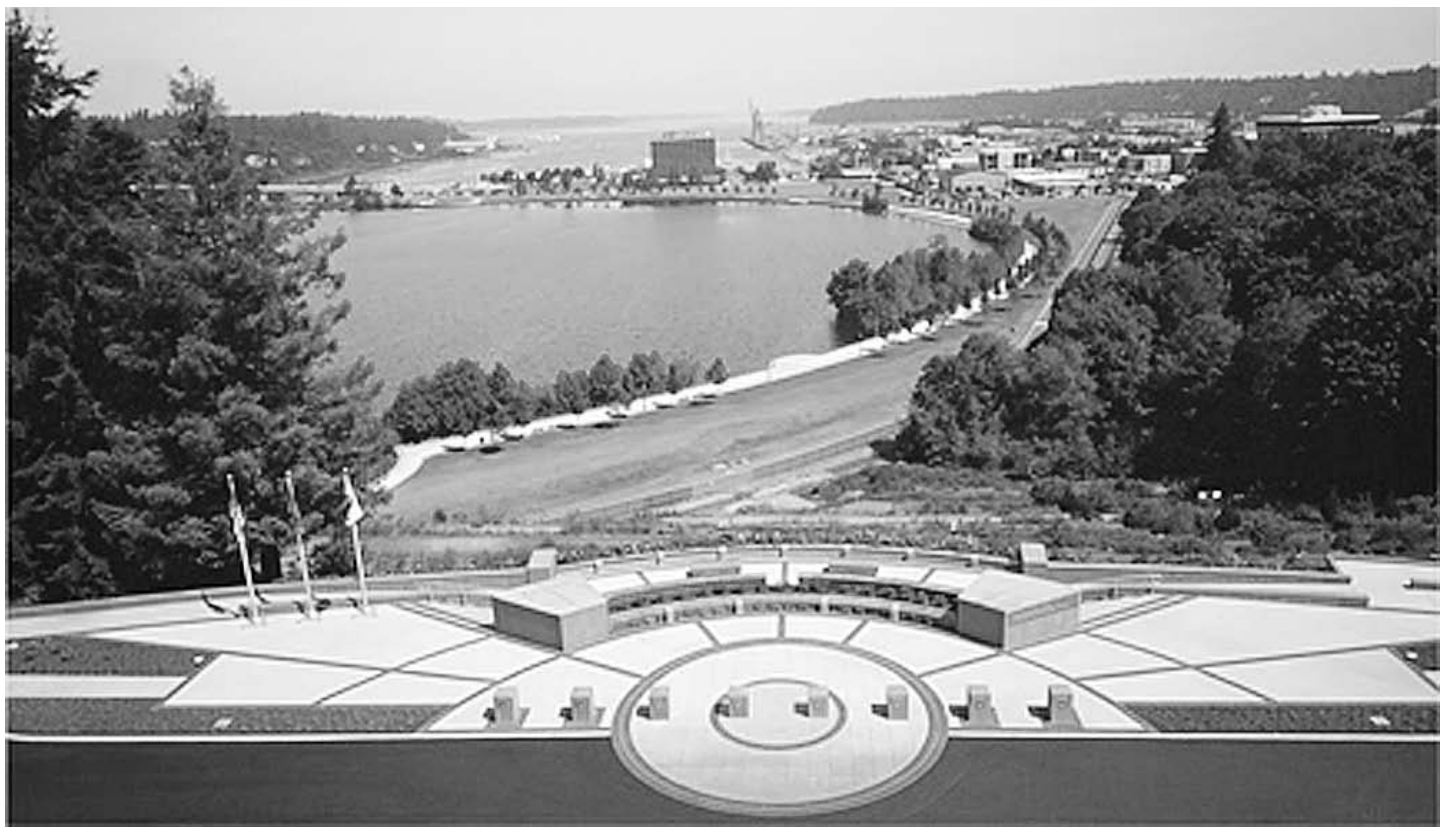
I got the isthmus,
I got the isthmus blues.
Don't know what I'm gonna do,
Whoa, I love that view.

Let's make our mark,
Let's build a park,
Don't zone away,
The mountains and the bay.

I got the isthmus,
I got the isthmus blues,
We know what we gotta do,
Whoa, we love that view

To hear LaVon Hardison sing the Isthmus Blues, direct your browser to: http://www.nuprometheus.com/friends/StudioIsthmusBlues

Photo by scotto16



Imperiled view from the Law Enforcement Memorial. (Eduardo Calderon)

▸ **ISTHMUS** continued from page 1

Temple of Justice, which was dedicated on May 1, 2006 after 15 years of planning and fundraising, and of her disappointment that the beauty of the setting of that memorial is now threatened by prospect of development on the isthmus. The names of 280 fallen officers are engraved on the memorial, which cost $2 million to build.

Time to "heal"

Olympia City Manager Hall, speaking in opposition to the bills, remarked that the Olympia community had just begun to "heal" after the divisive fight over the rezone. He concluded his remarks by pleading "I hope the state can let us heal...so please let us heal and not move this bill forward." This rather disingenuous remark puzzled many of the rezone opponents in the audience who were supporting efforts to block the rezone rather than "heal" from it—who exactly is beginning to heal, the people who wanted the rezone? Later, at the City Council meeting on 2/24/09, Berd Whitlock stated that Steve Hall's comments about "healing" did not adequately reflect the feelings of the community. "The healing process will not take place for me if this building gets built," said Whitlock. "Every shovel scooped into that ground will be like a wound."

Representative Brendan Williams disappointed many constituents when he expressed the view that taking legislative action on the isthmus would amount to a "taking," writing in a widely distributed email that "as an attorney I'm quite convinced that a legislative approach to this issue would amount to an unconstitutional "taking" under our state and federal constitutions. Such a takings would compel the state to pay the price for the full diminishment in economic value of the property that any state regulation inflicts."

Attorney Joanne Green of Olympia disagrees with Williams' analysis, saying "As long as there has been no permit application, the owner is not vested with rights under the law existing at the time." RCW 19.27.095 supports this view, as do several instances of case law, including *Quadrant Corp. v. State Growth Management Hearings Board* (2005) and *Abbey Road Group, LLC v. City of Bonney Lake* (2007).

The bill passed out of committee, was approved by the Rules Committee on March 3, and was passed by the Senate on March 5. House Bill 2081 must pass House Local Government and Housing Committee by March 26th and the House Floor by April 17th. If HB 2081 passes, it will take effect immediately. **To register support for the bill, call the legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000.** Since this is now a matter of statewide significance, out-of-town friends and family throughout Washington state who enjoy the view from the state Capitol Campus should be alerted to contact their legislators, as well.

A park is feasible

The feasibility study mandated by citizen initiative is being finalized, with the completed study expected to be available to the public on March 5. At a recent meeting of the Friends of the Waterfront, several people remarked they had seen a preliminary version of the study, and were pleased with the result. The study, performed by Sandy Fischer of Eckbow, Dean, Austin and Williams (EDAW) of Seattle, projected that the cost of creating a park on the isthmus, including the cost of acquiring the land and demolishing the buildings, would be between $28 and $35 million. "The bottom line," said Jerry Reilly of the Capitol Park Foundation, "is that a park on the isthmus is very feasible. If you read between the lines of the preliminary feasibility study, the main barrier to the feasibility of a park is insufficient support from the current city council."

> "I hope the state can let us heal... so please let us heal and not move this bill forward." — Olympia City Manager Steve Hall, making excuses for benefiting from the status quo.

The Friends of the Waterfront will sponsor a second citizens forum on Saturday, March 21 to present the feasibility study and update the public on what's been happening [see Announcements, page 2, for more details]. The Citizens for a Responsive Local Government Endorsement Committee, which has scheduled interviews with several candidates for city council, hopes to introduce candidates and announce its endorsements at the forum.

A serious mistake in Triway's view analysis

When Jeannette Hawkins of Triway Enterprises prepared her "Summary View Analysis Discussion" for submission into the city's public record in May 2008, she apparently did not anticipate that it would be carefully scrutinized. She was wrong. Activist Thad Curtz subjected this submission to his own sharp-eyed visual analysis, and discovered an egregious misrepresentation of fact which seriously jeopardizes Hawkins' credibility.

In the analysis, Hawkins refers to a brief prepared in 2003 by the Attorney General of the State of Washington's Ecology Division as "a decision," and, in quoting from the brief, boldly inserts a misleading statement into it (*see sidebar, above right*). The exact extent and location of the "view corridors" intended by the Capitol Campus design team has long been a source of heated controversy, but willfully misrepresenting a work product from the Attorney General's office to substantiate one's opinion is a galling act which is already beginning to backfire on Hawkins.

Hawkins inserted a parenthetical statement "(over only the Fountain Block)" which anyone familiar with the conventions of written language would assume was written as part of the original document, since inserted statements in quoted documents are enclosed within brackets, not parentheses. Even if Hawkins were to claim that she made an error in using parentheses instead of brackets, it is hard to believe that she would have thought the writer of the original document believed the view corridor to include only the fountain block, because on that very page of the brief is the statement that "Petitioners rely on comments that relate only to the proposal **for the four blocks on the isthmus (that do lie across the historic view corridor of the Capitol)**" [emphasis added].

Clearly, Hawkins knowingly misrepresented the language and the meaning of the brief to support her assertion that the designers of the Capitol Campus intended to preserve only the view corridor over the fountain block of the isthmus. So, how serious are the ramifications of such a misrepresentation?

"You lose all credibility"

Pretty serious, according to the former head of the division that prepared the brief, David Mears, who is now an associate law professor at the Vermont School of Law. "In my experience—and this is something I tell my students—when people misquote other attorneys, the legal process usually ferrets it out," said Mears. "And you usually lose all credibility with the tribunal that is deciding your case."

Because of Hawkins' misrepresentation in the view analysis, the Olympia City Council was relying on falsified information when they decided 5–2 in favor of the rezone last December. This misrepresentation in the public record will be considered in the appeal of the rezone to the Growth Management Hearings Board, which has already been filed, and it may also come into play in future legal challenges.

However, the avenues of recourse avail-

▸ **ISTHMUS** continues on page 6

What the brief said:

The view corridor envisioned by the builders of the Capitol Campus, and being carried out today through the Heritage Park project, is a north–south line from the Capitol across the lake to Budd Inlet. See Petitioners' Attachment O, Heritage Park Study, pp. III-5, IV-5, IV-7, IV-17, IV-45... The Heritage Park Plan calls for uses adjacent to the park that re-enforce park use and residential uses fit that criteria. Heritage Park Study, IV-23. **Petitioners rely on comments that relate only to the proposal for the four blocks on the isthmus (that do lie across the historic view corridor of the Capitol).**

What Jeannette Hawkins said it said:

The view corridor envisioned by the builders of the Capitol Campus, and being carried out today through the Heritage Park project, is a north–south line from the Capitol across the lake to Budd Inlet **(over only the Fountain Block)**, Heritage Park Study, pp. iii-5, IV-5, IV-7, IV-17, IV-45 (and)... [T]he Heritage Park Plan calls for uses adjacent to the park that re-enforce park use, and residential uses fit that criteria. Heritage Park Study, IV-23.

(*Emphasis added*)

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ISTHMUS continued from page 5

able to the public are limited to appeals and lawsuits. "I would be surprised if someone thought it was worth pursuing as fraud," said Mears, and a call to Thurston County Prosecutor Andrew Toynbee proved Mears to be correct. Toynbee stated that in order for the Prosecutor's office to pursue it as a crime, a complaint would have to be made with the police; Toynbee expressed doubts that the police would consider it worth pursuing.

Likewise, Jan Jutte of the Washington State Auditor's office, which promotes "accountability, fiscal integrity and openness in state and local government," explained that the State Auditor's office has had no jurisdiction over land use matters since a State Supreme Court ruling, *San Juan County v. Graham*, back in the 1950s. Jutte felt that the course currently being pursued, an appeal to the Growth Management Hearings Board, was probably the best avenue with regard to a case of apparent fraud involving the public record such as this one.

Visual access to the waterfront

To the surprise of many observers, the city has not yet submitted a Shoreline Master Program Amendment to the Department of Ecology, which along with a Comprehensive Plan Amendment, is necessary to develop the isthmus as Triway desires. A city staffer recently acknowledged that the city had not yet received the $3000 processing fee which Triway is required to pay for that SMP amendment process to continue. Some observers speculate that Triway is waiting to see how Senate Bill 5800 and House Bill 2081 fare, since that money will be lost if both bills pass, and multistory development of the isthmus is restricted.

If the SMP amendment does make it to the Department of Ecology, there is now a big question about whether or not the View Analysis submitted by Jeannette Hawkins of Triway will be deemed adequate, given that it has been shown to contain at least one substantial error. (Fact-checking of all of Hawkins' other submitted materials is now underway.) As reported in the February issues of *Works In Progress*, Department of Ecology spokesperson Sandra Lange explained that the department will need to determine that the amendment includes an adequate analysis of public visual access, as the Shoreline Management Act ensures both public physical access and visual access as an important part of its program. It is difficult to imagine that an analysis of visual access that includes an egregious, intentionally misleading misquote could be considered "adequate."

More information regarding the progress of legislation, the results of the feasibility study, and candidates for city council who are more responsive to the concerns of the public will be available at the second Citizens Forum on Saturday, March 21, 10 am, at the First United Methodist Church. Please see the announcement on page 2 for details.

The Olympia zeitgeist: A psychological analysis (part two)

by John Van Eenwyk

You may remember from last month that this is a series of essays on the symbols that have generated and currently generate the zeitgeist (or "spirit of the times") of Olympia. There, we noted that zeitgeist is related to the symbols of the times. Symbols are simply images that we invest with meaning.

The content of the images is the wood and water of Puget Sound. The meanings we invest in them depend on the feelings they activate in us. We saw that these generally fall into three broad categories—reverence, hostility, or craving—that lead to preservation, destruction, or exploitation. How these interact with one another determines whether the zeitgeist is positive or negative.

Horror on arrival

Remember Annie Dillard's description of Puget Sound?

> It was the rough edge of the world, where trees came smack down to the stones. The shore looked to Ada as if the corner of the continent had got torn off right here, sometime near yesterday, and the dark trees kept on growing like nothing happened....God might have created such a plunging shore as this before He thought of making people, and then when He thought of making people, He mercifully softened up the land in the palms of His hands wherever He expected them to live, which did not include here.

Imagine how it must have looked to those who first came here from Europe: Dense, impenetrable forest, meandering inlets of ocean, cold, bare stony shore. Imagine how it must have reminded them of the folktales of the land they left behind, those Grimm fairy tales of dark forests where witches, demons, dwarfs, magic, and loss reigned supreme. Hansel and Gretel, Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White all met their fate in the intimidating darkness of the woods.

But Puget Sound had no woods. In Europe, old growth forests had already been destroyed. Woods are second, third, multiple growth. For Europeans, virtually nothing of nature remained untouched. Along Puget Sound, however, the forests remained unaltered since the Creation. If ever God's hand was at work, it was here. To those raised on the intimidating mysteries of woods, however, Puget Sound's old growth forests were positively terrifying.

So they cut them down. They couldn't wait to get rid of them. Painfully prying land from forest, they opened clearings so they could see the sky, build a house, plant food. Blind to the abundance of the forests, they reworked the landscape into familiar European images—tamed, civilized, emasculated.

> All it took was to sow fear. That and to define value in terms of dollars: No dollars, no value. No dollars, no livelihood. No livelihood, no survival. Craving convinced hostility that preservation is a threat.

In short, they substituted one set of symbols for another. The overwhelming enormity of symbols of wood and water were supplanted by the reassuring manageability of symbols of civilization and management. In short, Puget Sound became Europe. Wood and water made many immigrants feel puny and impotent. Clearings and towns made them feel powerful and masterful.

Hostile/destruction marries craving/exploitation

But not everyone felt intimidated by old growth forests. Among the flood of immigrants to what was to become these United States were a goodly number of fortune seekers. Frustrated by constrictions of position and place in Europe, they found their gold in the limitless availability of resources in the New World. Here was money to be made. Here were the means for extravagant lifestyles that could make families and friends back in Europe chafe with envy.

In Puget Sound, all that was necessary was the manpower to clearcut the forests. And there they were, those superstitious immigrants who lacked only the means to hack out an existence in the wilderness. Enter East Coast money. Craving allied with hostility to get the job done.

Lumber mills could not be constructed fast enough. Overnight, phallic wharves penetrated the Sound everywhere. Fortunes were made. Surnames became household words. New governments, established in the full flush of resource-driven cash, celebrated and memorialized those who footed the bills. Legends were born.

Not, of course, legends of witches and dwarfs, princesses and servant girls, magic and transformation. No, these legends were of mansions and cities, factories and ships, black smoke and oily water, legislation and litigation. Nevertheless, some things endured: Spells were still cast upon the unsuspecting, leading to their destruction; powerful forces continued to overwhelm the innocent; and perhaps most curiously, people routinely got irretrievably lost in the forests.

Thus, wilderness did not end with the destruction of the old growth forests. It simply relocated. Formerly a function of wood and water, now it became a function of mind and heart. Great trees rooted in Mother Earth were replaced by towers of concrete and steel rooted in money and power. The confounding complexity of ecosystems faded into the monotonous monoculture of greed.

But wait!

Fortunately, hostility and craving are not the totality of responses to the wood and water of Puget Sound. There is also reverence. Some fled the cities and moved as far as they could into the forests. Others waged endless war with developers to preserve as much as possible of what was left of the original wood and water.

Sometimes, greed paired with reverence in acts of preservation. There was money to be made from those who inhabited civilization yet longed for primeval wilderness. Hunters and fishermen paid dearly to be taken to the Source. Others paid handsome sums simply to sit on porches overlooking the wood, water and mountains of Puget Sound.

That hostility and reverence rarely combined opened the playing field to craving/exploitation. Hostility became simply a pawn in that game. All it took was to sow fear. That and to define value in terms of dollars: No dollars, no value. No dollars, no livelihood. No livelihood, no survival. Craving convinced hostility that preservation is a threat.

It worked well for the greedy. Sometimes aligning with the hostile, sometimes with the reverent, they could always reach their goal. Money was the reward for playing the game. Playing the game was simply a means to an end. No end, no game. No game, no development. No development, no end.

The game is still played today. Witness events in Olympia., which will be the subject of our next essay.

'Til next month...

Photo by Robert Whitlock.

Despite budget cuts & layoffs, Thurston Prosecutor vows to continue Global War on "Attempted Disorderly Conduct"

by Phan Nguyen

On Feb. 28, *The Olympian* reported that in the face of statewide budget cuts, Thurston County would be forced to deal with a projected $5.7 million shortfall. In particular, *The Olympian* reported on the ramifications of this shortfall on the Thurston County Prosecutor's Office:

> *Prosecuting Attorney Ed Holm said he'd need to cut five deputy prosecuting attorneys and possibly one or two office staff members to reduce expenses by more than $500,000.*
>
> *He said those cuts would result in his office no longer charging people for most misdemeanors and reducing the number of drug cases and nonviolent assaults it prosecutes.*
>
> *I've thinned the office down so it's below where it was when I walked through the door in 1999," he said. He added: "We don't have spare time here anymore."*

If that is the case, one must wonder why Ed Holm's office continues to pursue the cases of the Oly 26—the charges against 25 women and one man for misdemeanors alleged to have occurred during the Port of Olympia protest on Nov. 13, 2007.

Thurston County residents must ask whether this is a wise use of the county's resources. Holm's office did not press charges until one year after the date of the alleged incident, just before the statute of limitations ran out. Each defendant was charged with one count of "Attempted Disorderly Conduct" and one count of "Obstruction," both misdemeanors. The attorney prosecuting these misdemeanors is a high-ranking prosecutor in Holm's office, James Powers, who makes $124,776 a year. As a Senior Deputy Prosecutor, Powers has previously worked on homicide cases. In fact, Powers is currently overseeing two homicide cases in addition to the 26 misdemeanor cases.

Because the county waited one year before pressing charges, many of the Oly 26 defendants were no longer residing in Washington. In the interest of moving on, six defendants have taken favorable deals under terms in which the Obstruction charge is dropped and a "stipulation of continuance" is imposed on the Attempted Disorderly Conduct. In other words, the county has not secured a single guilty plea on the charges. There have been no fines imposed beyond a $43 court fee and an additional fee that can be served with 15 hours of community service.

What, then, is the Thurston County Prosecutor's Office hoping to achieve in pursuing these misdemeanor charges?

Why did the county choose to revisit these cases one year after the alleged incident?

Why has the county tasked one of its most senior prosecutors, who also handling homicides, with prosecuting these misdemeanors—and in particular misdemeanors as weak as "Attempted Disorderly Conduct"?

Part of the answer can be found in the political nature of these cases and the desire to scapegoat the defendants for actions that either never occurred or were never attributed to the defendants. *The Olympian* framed the Nov. 2007 Port of Olympia protests as one of rampant violence and property destruction. However, no one, including none of the Oly 26, was ever arrested or charged with a violent crime or for a crime relating to property damage. For all the claims of violence and rampant lawlessness, most of the arrests resulting from the Nov. 2007 port protests were made under the tame allegations of "pedestrian interference." Out of the 66 arrests, the County has secured only one conviction. The cases against seven other port protesters were dismissed.

In continuous editorializing, *The Olympian* shamed the city for failing to hold protesters accountable for actions they never committed. (For full details, see the June 2008 and Nov. 2008 issues of *Works in Progress* at *www.olywip.org*) Following the Nov. 2007 port protests, other highly profiled incidents were wrongly attributed to the port protesters: the 2008 Dead Prez incident and the graffiti and breaking of windows following a May Day rally for immigrant rights. The Olympian Editoral Board drew connections among all these separate incidents and demanded a strong response from the city. Someone had to pay. City Manager Steve Hall promised the editorial board that more port protesters from would be charged. The result was the Oly 26 charges. Indeed, the Olympian Editorial Board once demanded that Ed Holm "put his best attorneys on the case from the start"—hence the assignment of homicide prosecutor James Powers on the present case.

Although six of the Oly 26 have taken deals, the remaining 20 have continued to appear in court for multiple pretrial hearings. These appearances have taxed the Thurston County Courthouse as well, which was recently forced to lay off 10 of its 15 security officers due to budget cuts. Despite this burden, prosecutor Powers requested to break up the Oly 26 cases into four or five separate trials—with each trial lasting more than a week—which would give the County more opportunities to try and win a few cases, while tying up District Court in process. Meanwhile, Proseuctor Holm complains that "we don't have spare time here anymore."

If you find these moves irresponsible and a waste of limited state resources, complain to the elected Thurston County Prosecutor, Ed Holm, and call on him to dismiss these spurious, outdated, and politically motivated charges:

> Edward G. Holm
> Thurston County Prosecuting Attorney
> 2000 Lakeridge Dr SW
> Olympia, WA 98502
> (360) 786-5540

Also, consider donating to the Oly 26 legal defense fund, which is currently operating at 1% of the senior deputy prosecuting attorney's salary. Make checks payable to:

> Port of Olympia Legal Defense Fund
> PO Box 295
> Olympia, WA 98507-0295

or pay by PayPal to the email address *oly.port.ldf@gmail.com*

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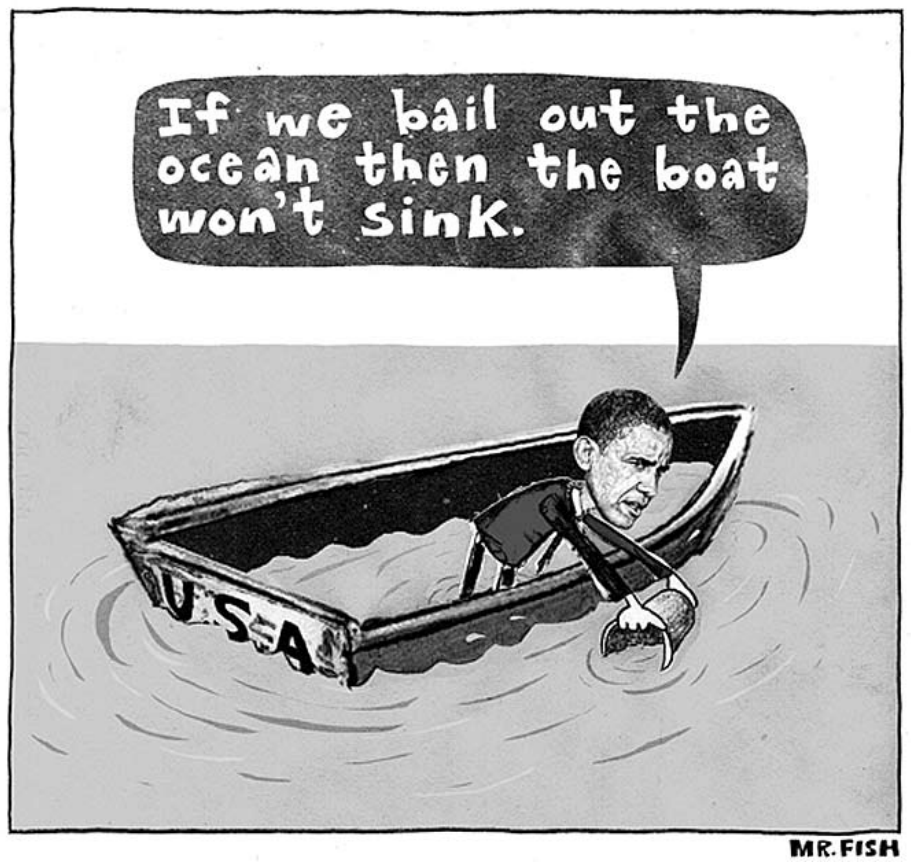

The politics of bank nationalization

by Jay Mandle

As a response to the financial crisis, the Bush Administration's Troubled Asset Recovery Program (TARP) was woefully inadequate. But its implementation brought to a close a nearly thirty year period during which market deregulation was the touchstone of economic policy. Now, market fundamentalism is dead. As a result of the economic free-fall we are experiencing, the question being asked is whether the government's involvement in the economy is adequately focused or large enough, not whether it should be undertaken at all. Governmental intervention is the new flavor of the month.

But as important as this shift is, it masks an even more important continuity. To obtain office, elected officials still require the financial support of the country's economic elite. In the past, these contributors had the goal of ensuring that their businesses were left alone to pursue their private interests. Now the tide has turned and their viability requires government assistance.

The central actor in this flip-flop has been Wall Street. The financial sector used its campaign contributions to advance economic deregulation. Today, Wall Street continues to be the single most important source of political donations and therefore influence. But now it lobbies for bailouts, not self-reliance.

Despite the bailouts however, the economic crisis has continued to intensify. This is largely because the financial sector remains dysfunctional. This problem must be solved so that credit can start to flow again. The most straight-forward way to accomplish this objective—an approach the Obama Administration resists—is to nationalize insolvent banks, reorganize them, and then sell them to new owners. Doing so would create a fresh start. And while such an approach obviously would be costly to the government, it would create banks with sound balance sheets and also avoid rewarding those responsible for the present fiasco.

The financial sector vehemently opposes nationalization. To date it has gotten its way. Instead of taking over giant but weak banks, the Obama Administration has chosen instead to provide them with funds in the hope that massive injections of money will rejuvenate them. It is unclear whether this approach—unsuccessful at the moment—will ever work. But what is not in doubt is that the political system still is providing the big campaign funders with their policy preferences.

In this context, the need to reduce the political clout of the financial sector and democratize the political funding system takes on an urgency that can hardly be exaggerated. Clean elections—the public funding of electoral campaigns—have long been thought of as a "good government" process issue. The tendency has been to relegate to it to the political back-burner, especially in a time of crisis. No longer. It now has to be thought of as our best available means to work our way out of the economic debacle.

What is clear is that we need to engage in a wide-ranging and difficult political debate concerning our economic future. The market failures that confront us are the worst that we have seen since the Great Depression. If nationalizing banks or its functional equivalent is to occur, the terms of our political discussions must not be biased by any individual sector, and particularly not by a self-interested financial community.

Nationalizing failed banks will not be an easy sell. The country has had a long romance with markets and the residue of that infatuation persists among significant segments of the population. Such a scheme will evoke a conditioned response of hostility. But dire economic circumstances may well erode that opposition. No one knew before the 1930s that a New Deal would be acceptable to—even desired by—the American people. The 1920s after all, like our current period, was a period of retreat from the progressive reforms of the early decades of the century. It is very likely that today's conventional wisdom too concerning the limits of policy initiatives will be radically altered as the economy continues to fail.

The danger here is that a failure to accept nationalization, joined with a protracted continuation of the current bailout strategy, risks producing a counter-productive populism. The threat is that taxpayers will rebel against seeing their money thrown into a financial black-hole that produces little or no positive economic response. If such a rebellion occurred, it is at least possible that an atavistic anger could impede the search for financial viability and might even end up with a return to some form of market fundamentalism. After all, if the government botches the job, what choice is there?

As presently structured, our political system is ill-equipped to deal effectively with the economic crisis. To date, the Obama Administration's response to it all too clearly reflects the limited range of options that political funders will tolerate. Widening the policy alternatives requires that wealth no longer dictate the political agenda. Public funding of electoral campaigns—especially at the Congressional level—is critical in order to allow us to grapple effectively with the economic crisis.

Jay Mandle is the W. Bradford Wiley Professor of Economics at Colgate University. His latest book, Democracy, America, and the Age of Globalization*, published by Cambridge University Press (Dec. 2007) explores the rapid growth of income inequality, the dominant role of corporate wealth in elections, and the need for the public financing of campaigns.*

Two Congressmembers forget who's their Daddy, visit Gaza

Press Release

Two Members of Congress, Keith Ellison (D–Minnesota) and Brian Baird (D–Washington) visited Gaza in February to view first-hand the destruction from recent Israeli air and ground attacks, and to meet with international and local relief agencies.

The visit, which did not have the official sanction of the Obama Administration, is the first time anyone from the United States government has entered into Gaza in more than three years.

Prior to entering Gaza, the Congressmen met with the chief negotiator of the Palestinian Authority, and traveled to the West Bank city of Ramallah to meet with Dr. Riad Malki, Foreign Minister of the Palestinian Authority.

During their visit, Ellison and Baird toured the Israeli towns of Sderot and Ashkelon, which have been the targets of numerous rocket attacks, repeatedly launched from within the Gaza strip, and which Israel has said are one of the root causes for their recent actions into Gaza.

"Staff from the US State Department advised us of security concerns for our own safety, and we are well aware of the sensitive political issues involved in this visit," said both Congressmen in an official release. "But we believe it is important to be here to see what happened for ourselves; to meet directly with people who have been affected by the destruction, and to express our concern and support," said Congressman Baird.

"We also want to better understand what can and must be done to recover from the devastation, address the underlying issues, and work toward a lasting, just and peaceful resolution," said Congressman Ellison.

After spending the day visiting various locations within Gaza, and meeting with civilians and relief workers, Ellison and Baird were deeply affected by what they had seen and heard.

"The stories about the children affected me the most," said Ellison. "No parent, or anyone who cares for kids, can remain unmoved by what Brian and I saw here."

"The amount of physical destruction and the depth of human suffering here is staggering" said Baird. "Entire neighborhoods have been destroyed, schools completely leveled, fundamental needs such as water, sewer, and electricity facilities have been hit and immobilized. Relief agencies, themselves, have been heavily damaged. The personal stories of children being killed in their homes or schools, of entire families wiped out, and relief workers prevented from evacuating the wounded are heart wrenching. What went on here and what is continuing to go on, is shocking and troubling beyond words," the Washington state Congressman said.

Inquiring about the status of relief efforts, the Congressmen learned that some aid material has been allowed in since the intensity of the attacks lessened a month ago, but much is still being blocked by the Israeli Defense Forces. An example of aid that has been banned by the Israeli Government includes lentils, macaroni, tomato paste, and other common food products. Basic building materials, generator fuel and parts to repair damaged water treatment equipment have also been kept out.

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"If this had happened in our own country, there would be national outrage and an appeal for urgent assistance. We are glad that President Obama acted quickly to send much needed humanitarian funding to Gaza for this effort. However, the arbitrary and unreasonable Israeli limitations on food, and repair and reconstruction materials are unacceptable and indefensible. People—innocent children, women and non-combatants—are going without water, food and sanitation, while the things they so desperately need are sitting in trucks at the border, being denied permission to go in," said Ellison.

The Congressmen's concerns about treatment of Palestinians were not limited to Gaza. They also visited Palestinian hospitals that treat patients from East Jerusalem and the West Bank. There they met with doctors, nurses and hospital directors who described how official Israeli policies restrict border checkpoints which make it exceedingly difficult and expensive for patients, nurses, medical technicians, and other essential personnel to reach the hospital to receive or provide care.

"It's hard for anyone in our country to imagine how it must feel to have a sick child who needs urgent care or is receiving chemotherapy or dialysis, then to be forced to take a needlessly lengthy route, walk rather than drive, and wait in lines as long as two hours simply to get to the hospital. As a health care professional myself, I found this profoundly troubling—no, actually it's beyond that, it is outrageous," said Baird.

Responding to this and other issues the Congressmen emphasized that fundamental changes and solutions are needed beyond the immediate challenges in Gaza.

"The first and most urgent priority must be to help the people in Gaza. At the same time, the rocket attacks against Israeli cities must stop immediately. Just as the people of Gaza should not be subject to what they have experienced, the Israeli civilians should not have to live in fear of constant and indiscriminate rocketing. The entire region and the international community must recommit itself to making the difficult but necessary changes to bring about lasting and just peace, and security for the region. President Obama has made important and encouraging initiatives. United States Special Envoy, George Mitchell, will undoubtedly listen long to the aggrieved parties and then give advice accordingly. For now it is up to leaders and citizens here in Gaza, the West Bank and in Israel to move forward toward that shared goal," Ellison and Baird concluded.

Disappeared in the name of national security

by Mohamed Farag Bashmilah

From October 2003 until May 2005, I was illegally detained by the US government and held in CIA-run "black sites" with no contact with the outside world. On May 5, 2005, without explanation, my American captors removed me from my cell and cuffed, hooded, and bundled me onto a plane that delivered me to Sana'a, Yemen. I was transferred into the custody of my own government, which held me—apparently at the behest of the United States—until March 27, 2006, when I was finally released, never once having faced any terrorism-related charges. Since my release, the US government has never explained why I was detained and has blocked all attempts to find out more about my detention.

What I do know is that the Jordanian government—after torturing me for several days—handed me over to a US "rendition team" in Amman, which then abducted me, forced me onto a plane, and flew me to Afghanistan. During this, and several other transfers between CIA prisons, I was subjected to a brutal and deeply humiliating "preparation" ritual. I was stripped naked, dressed in a diaper, shackled, blindfolded and hooded, and then boarded onto a waiting plane. I was forced into painful positions, often reeling from the blows and kicks of the men who had "prepared" me for flight.

> The US government has never explained why I was detained and has blocked all attempts to find out more about my detention

During my detention, I agonized constantly about my family back in Yemen, knowing they had no idea where I was. They never once received information about who had taken me, why I was taken, or even whether I was alive. They were never contacted by the US government or the International Committee of the Red Cross. My mother and wife were in such anguish that they had to be hospitalized for illness, stress, and anxiety. My father passed away while I was disappeared and I am still distraught thinking that he died without knowing whether I was dead or alive. I continue to suffer from bouts of illness that medical doctors attribute to the treatment I experienced in the "black sites." My physical symptoms are made worse by the anxiety caused by never knowing where I was held, and not having any form of acknowledgment that I was disappeared and tortured by the US government.

I believe that acknowledgment is the first step toward accounting for a wrongdoing. The American public needs to face what has happened to those of us who were disappeared and mistreated in the name of their national security, demand accountability for those who committed torture and other crimes, and acknowledge the suffering of those who became victims. Today, a group of concerned Americans called on President Obama to take the first steps to do just that, by demanding that he establish an independent commission of inquiry into the treatment of detainees in the "War on Terror."

President Obama himself recently said that "democracy requires accountability and accountability requires transparency." If he establishes this commission, it would break the silence about what has happened and signal a real commitment not only to changing the practices of the past but also to ensuring that they do not happen again. Both the American public and the victims of these past policies need to understand what the CIA did in the name of U.S. national security. We need to find out where we were all held and who is still missing. And we need justice for the crimes that were committed in violation of our most basic human rights—rights the United States has always claimed to uphold and defend. President Obama's recent order to the CIA to shut down its secret prisons was a significant step in the right direction, but it did not resolve the unfinished business of establishing accountability and restoring transparency.

The American public deserves to know what was done to people like me—and I deserve to know why I lost nineteen months of my life—all in the name of protecting their security. It gives me faith to see that Americans are standing up for my rights and calling for the truth to be exposed. It is my hope that the President will not only establish this commission, but that he will also direct the relevant authorities to investigate and prosecute those who broke American laws in ordering the torture and disappearance of people like me. Truth and justice are not in opposition; both are necessary, and both are the right of all Americans and the victims harmed in their name.

Mohamed Farag Ahmad Bashmilah, a citizen of Yemen, is a client of the International Human Rights Clinic at NYU School of Law, which represents him in his quest for truth and justice.

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